



NEWS RELEASE

United States
Department of Agriculture

Forest Service
Salmon - Challis National
Forest
1206 South Challis
Salmon, Idaho 83467



October 6, 2008

Forest Service Reversed on Idaho Cobalt Project

Salmon-Challis National Forest Supervisor Bill Wood received word that the Regional Forester has reversed the decision on the Idaho Cobalt Project. The Regional Office found that the analysis of potential effects of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and the administrative record are sufficient and meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. "The Record of Decision (ROD), however, failed to adequately address some of the criteria for approval of the proposed plan of operations. The Regional Office indicated that the ROD is unclear as to whether the proposed plan of operations meets all requirements for environmental protection. The Forest needs to provide additional explanation in the ROD to better disclose that the approved plan will meet all of the necessary requirements" stated Forest Supervisor Bill Wood.

The Forest will be required to issue another ROD to specifically address those items that need additional clarification. The Forest expects to have the revised ROD issued in November for an additional 45 day period when individuals or groups that have established "standing" may again appeal the document.

Four groups/individuals appealed the FEIS and ROD; Noranda Exploration Inc. and the Blackbird Mining Co. Lt. Partnership; Boulder-Whiteclouds Council and Earthworks; the Nez Perce Tribe and Charles Pace, Ph.D.

The appeal process is an important part of the NEPA process. Reviewers of the appeals have done their best to ensure the decision will withstand the intense scrutiny the project is expected to receive. "The Forest recognizes the importance of this project for Formation Capital Corporation and the community, and we will do our best to address this as promptly as possible" stated Forest Supervisor Bill Wood.

For further information please contact Kimberly Nelson, Salmon-Cobalt District Ranger, at 208-756-5200.

####